(b) Does not arise.

Postponement of Sixth SAARC Summit

*106. SHRI C.P. MUDALAGIRIYAPPA:
SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the sixth SAARC Summit scheduled to take place at Colombo had to be postponed;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the alternate date fixed for the Summit;

(d) whether India was consulted before the postponement;

(e) if so, the details thereof:

(f) whether Sri Lanka held India responsible for the postponement of the said summit;

(g) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(h) whether the postponement of the Summit is likely to affect the regional balance in South Asia?

THE MINISTRY OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) to (h). The Sixth SAARC Summit was scheduled to be held at Colombo on November 7 to 9. However, on November 1, Member states were informed that the king of Bhutan would be unable to attend the said Summit on account of unforeseen problems.

The President of the Maldives in his capacity as Chairman of SAARC. carried out consultations with other Heads of State/ Heads of Government on this Sumit. After giving careful thought to the views expressed to him by Heads of State/Government, he came to the conclusion on November 6 that the Sixth Summit could not be held on schedule as Bhutan would not be represented at the Head of State or Government level. At the same time, he expressed the hope that after further consultations in the near future, the Heads of State/Government of the SAARC Member States may be able to agree on fresh dates for the Sixth SAARC Summit.

Following this advice, President Gayoom has already initiated consultations with Heads of State/Government on the possibility of convening a short, functional Summit in Colombo, perferably during the current calender year. For this purpose, he sent his Foreign Minister, Mr. Fathulla Jameel, to India from 19 to 21 November as his Special Envoy to consult with EAM and PM on this question. We conveyed to him our hope that it would be possible to hold a Summit Meeting on the kind proposed during the year.

India's view as conveyed to the SAARC Chairman, President Gayoom, on the possibility as convening the Summit in the absence of one of the Heads of State or Government was that this would not conform to propriety or principle.

We have seen the statement made on November 12 by the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, Mr. Harold Herat. It is not our intention to comment in any detail on the statement since we would not wish to add to the element of acrimony which has been needlessly injected into SAARC affairs. We should prefer to let the facts speak for themselves.

The postponement of the Summit is not likely to affect the regional balance in South Asia.

[Translation]

Oil and Natural Gas Reserves in Bihar

*107. SHRI KAMLA MISHRA MADHUKAR: Will the Minister of

PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Oil and Natural Gas Commission has discerned great prospects of oil and natural gas reserves in areas of Madhubani, Purnia, East and West Champaran districts of Bihar; and

(b) if so, the scheme proposed to be formulated by the Government for exploring the oil and natural gas in those areas?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND) : (a) and (b). No, Sir. However, exploration for hydrocarbons is in progress in various parts of Bihar.

[English]

Price go Poultry, Eggs

*108. SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the price of poultry eggs in the country is higher than the price prevailing in International Market;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to bring down the price?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Allotment of Petrol/Diesel Retail outlets and LPG Agencies to SC/ST

*109. SHRI MRUTYUNJAYA NAYAK: SHRI SRIKANTA JENA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of petrol/diesel retail outlets and LPG agencies in the country, State-wise and Union Territory-wise;

(b) the number out of these allotted to the persons belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes;

(c) whether the allotment made to Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes is in conformity with their reservation quota; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) and (b). As on 1-10-91, there were 15077 petrol diesel retail outlets and 3999 LPG distributorships in the country, of which 980 retail outlets and 651 distributorships pertained to persons belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

(c) and (d) The prescribed percentage reservation for different categories including SC/ST is maintained by the oil industry for each State/Union Territory on the basis of a 100 point roster adopted on a rolling basis while preparing the marketing plans.

The progress is monitored.